

R 210815Z NOV 07 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY ASMARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9262
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
SECDEF WASHDC
JICCENT MACDILL AFB FL
DIA WASHDC
CJTF-HOA J2X CAMP LEMONIER DJ
CIA WASHDC
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 000888

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR DS, DSS, DS/IP, DS/IP/AF, DS/IP/ITA,
DS/OPO/FPD, DS/IP/SPC/SO, DS/T/MSD, DS/ICI/PII, DS/ICI/CI,
AF/EX AND AF/E

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/20/2017

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [AMGT](#) [ER](#)

SUBJECT: ASMARA EAC MEETING TO REQUEST EXTENSION OF 24/7
RESIDENTIAL GUARD COVERAGE

REF: A. ASMARA 675

[B. ASMARA 679](#)

[C. STATE 127385](#)

[D. ASMARA 882](#)

[E. MCCLANAHAN-BROCKHUIZEN EMAIL](#)

Classified By: CDA JENNIFER MCINTYRE FOR REASONS 1.4. (B) AND (D)

[1. \(C\) SUMMARY:](#) This is an action request for DS. See paragraph 5. EAC met on 11/20/07 to discuss extending the temporary 24/7 residential local guard force (LGF) coverage for all Embassy residences for another three months. EAC members agreed the political/military situation between Ethiopia and Eritrea remains tense due to military build-ups on both sides of the undemarcated border and in the lead-up to the anticipated EEBC decision to demarcate the border by coordinates at the end of November. Post has heard reports recently of Eritrean military breaking down doors of residences in Asmara seeking deserters and/or new recruits in military round-ups. Bilateral relations between the Government of the State of Eritrea (GSE) and USG remain poor, with GSE leadership publicly blaming the USG for the border impasse and alleging U.S. support for an Ethiopian invasion, which could instigate anti-American sentiment. EAC members noted that post, regional and Washington assessments indicate that this high state of tension will likely continue beyond the EEBC decision date through the winter. The Government of the State of Eritrea (GSE) continues to impede Embassy operations and have refused repeated RSO requests to meet with GSE officials to discuss security support to the Mission and diplomatic residences. There have been an increase in reports of crime in areas of Asmara where the diplomatic community resides. END SUMMARY.

[2. \(C\) RSO](#) informed the EAC that the temporary 24/7 LGF residential coverage authorized as a precautionary measure in response to the announced closure of the Eritrean Consulate in Oakland, CA is set to expire on 12/11/07 (Reftels A, B and C). RSO recommended the 24/7 coverage be extended for another three months given the local tensions in Asmara, increase in crime in residential areas and military buildups on the Eritrean-Ethiopian border in preparation for potential military conflict. RSO noted hostile anti-U.S. articles in the GSE-controlled media alleging war with Ethiopia is imminent and will occur with the USG support. RSO stated his concerns that should conflict break out, anti-American attacks directed at Post personnel or residences could occur and the GSE may prove resistant to providing the Embassy with any support.

[3. \(C\) RSO](#) reminded the EAC that Post has no assurances the

GSE will provide any security support to the U.S. Embassy or its residences. The Eritrean Police continue to refuse to meet with the RSO. In two meetings with the MFA within the last five weeks, Charge and RSO specifically raised the issue of GSE security support to the Mission. The MFA's Director of Protocol has claimed he is unable to intervene to obtain meetings for RSO with the Police. Post has no ARSO or MSG Detachment. Post's sole, reliable security resources are the LGF and Post's surveillance detection unit, (SDU). In recent weeks, Post has heard several reports that the GSE has broken into residences in Asmara looking for deserted soldiers or as part of round-ups to collect new military recruits. RSO is concerned if tensions continue to rise, the GSE might target USG houses, particularly if they appear not to have daytime LGF coverage. RSO has also been reporting on an increase in the number and intensity of surveillance of Post personnel by the GSE.

14. (SBU) Post has also seen an increase in reports of opportunistic crime in areas where Americans eat, live and congregate as a result of continuing economic problems in Eritrea. On 11/19/2007, RSO was informed of two home invasions in close proximity to Embassy residences by the UNMEE Deputy Chief Security Officer and the UK Deputy Head of Mission. RSO was told there is a gang of criminals targeting residences that do not have daytime guard coverage (Reftel D).

15. (SBU) Post requests that DS extend Post's temporary 24/7 LGF coverage for three months, from 12/12/2007 - 03/11/2008.

At that time, Post will re-evaluate the security situation and see if this temporary coverage will still be needed. RSO has been using existing LGF to provide this coverage through offering LGF overtime. RSO would prefer to use this method as it would not involve hiring, vetting, training and eventual termination of temporarily hired LGF. Based on the previous temporary coverage, manning all of Post's residences will cost \$115 USD/day. For the 90-day period mentioned above, Post is requesting an additional \$10,350 USD be added to its FY08 5821 residential guard account. RSO will work with DS/OPO/FPD in facilitating this request (Reftel E).

16. (U) Post appreciates the rapid response DS has provided in the past to help meet Post's security needs during this heightened period of tension in Asmara. POC is RSO Sean McClanahan. IVG: 596-2778. Post: 291-1-12-00-04, x 2778. STE: 291-1-12-24-02.
MCINTYRE